I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East – Project Timeline

1996

- *Hyak to Ellensburg* Corridor Study – May 1996
  Identification of problems, conceptual solutions, and early estimates for the I-90 corridor

1997

- Planning analysis for first section, *Hyak to Easton* – October 1997
  Further study to determine the feasibility of initial solution concepts

1998

- Begin engineering investigations for *Hyak to Easton*
  Early engineering analysis and survey work (photogrammetry, bathymetry of Keechelus Lake, LIDAR terrain mapping, geotechnical investigations)

1999

- Early public meetings – April 1999
- *Hyak to Easton* Route Feasibility Study – October 1999
  Investigation of alternate corridor route possibilities

2000

- Begin *Hyak to Easton* environmental document – December 1999
  Notice of Intent publication for Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Public scoping meetings – February 2000

2001

- Begin environmental discipline studies (air, water, noise, etc.) – July 2000

2002

- Study alternatives selected – July 2002
  Project title changed to "I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East." Screening process completed. Remaining alternatives to be included in I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East
  Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

2003

- Additional refinement of study alternatives and supplemental analysis

2004

2005

- DEIS circulation and comment period
- DEIS public hearings – June/July 2005

2006

- Select Preferred Alternative early 2006
- Begin Preliminary Engineering of preferred alternative for *Hyak to Keechelus Dam*

2007

- Publish Final Environmental Impact Statement and issue Record of Decision – Spring 2007
- Contract preparation *Hyak to Keechelus Dam*
  Final design and preparation of contract plans; Obtain right of way and federal lands easement

2008

Design Phase and Right of Way

2009

2010

- Advertise Contract *Hyak to Keechelus Dam* – Fall 2009

2011

- Scheduled Construction Start
  Hyak to Keechelus Dam – Spring 2010

2012

Construction Phase

2013

2014

2015

- Scheduled Construction Completion
  Hyak to Keechelus Dam – Summer 2015

2016

New Funding

The new gas tax (9.5¢ phased in over four years) funds $387.7 million to design and build the first five miles of this project (*Hyak to Keechelus Dam)*. The Washington State Legislature demonstrated their sustained commitment to the people and businesses of our state by enacting the 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding Package. In addition to the gas tax, the package also includes a new vehicle weight fee and increases in other license fees and charges. This package funds over 270 projects that will make roads and bridges safer as well as ease choke points on the system.

"Washington's Future Just Got Better"

MAKING EVERY DOLLAR COUNT.

I-90 Snoqualmie Pass Conference:

January 3, 2006, 5:00-7:00 p.m.
Gonzaga University – Cataldo Hall
704 E Sharp Ave.
Spokane, WA 99258

Presentation begins at 5:15 p.m.
For information call Mark Pettit (509) 577-1628

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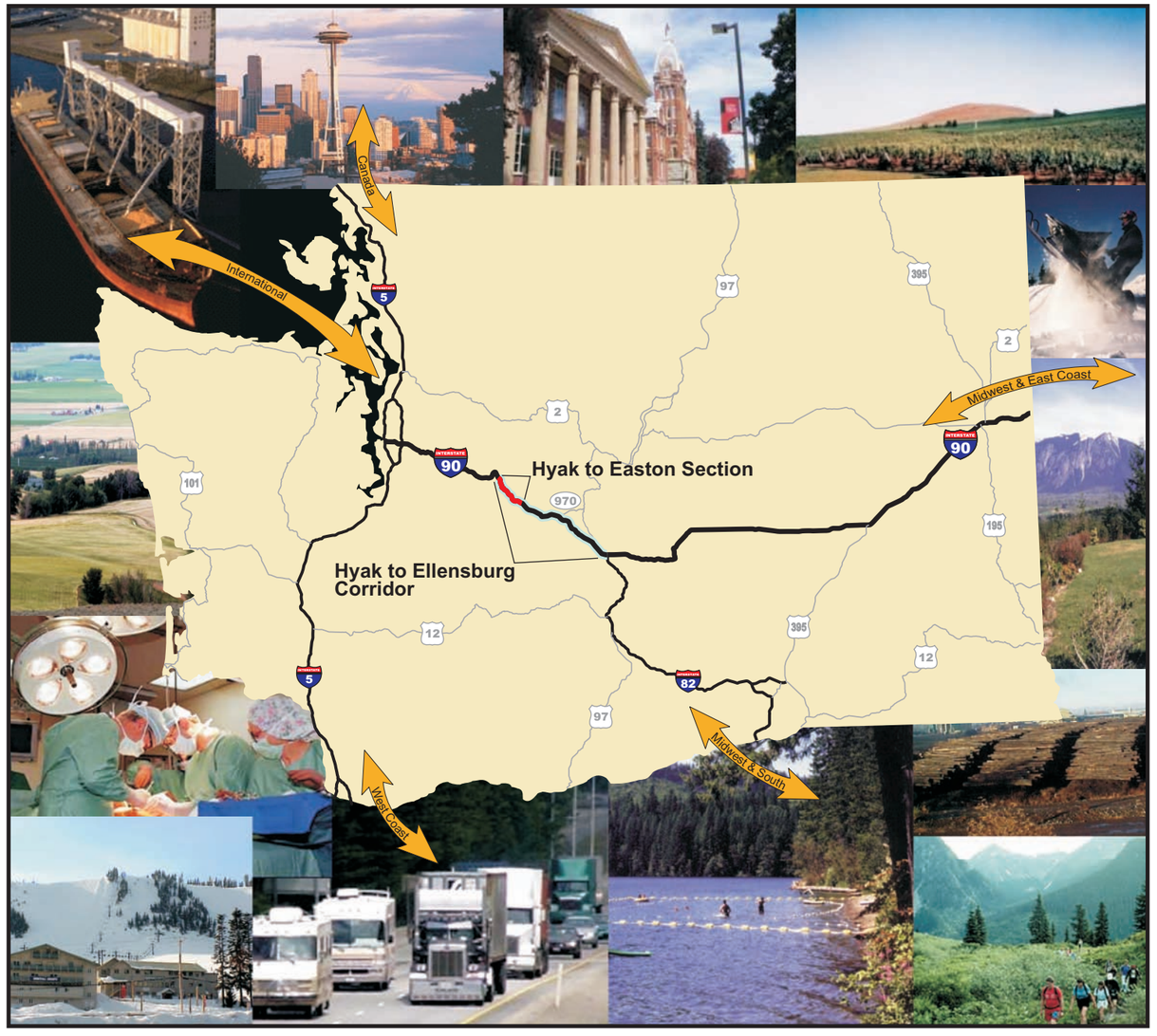
Updated March 2006

Washington State Department of Transportation

I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East

CASCADE CONNECTION

Interstate 90 is a critical east–west transportation link connecting Puget Sound's deep-water ports, large population centers, and varied retail/service businesses with the farmlands, diverse industries, and extensive outdoor recreational areas of Eastern Washington. The uninterrupted movement of cars, trucks, freight, and recreational vehicles across the Cascade Mountains and over Snoqualmie Pass is essential to our quality of life and the economic vitality of Washington State and the region.



Why is the I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Project important?

Avalanches and Closures

The Snoqualmie Pass summit on I-90 (elevation 3,022 feet) is the only section of interstate highway in Washington State with an operational plan for routine closures. Due to road conditions, accidents, and avalanches, the pass was closed for an average of 120 hours per year between 1992 and 2004. Of those closures, 80 hours per year were related to avalanches. It is conservatively estimated that avalanche closures cost business and private travelers $17.5 million annually.

Traffic Volumes

I-90 is the primary east–west route for Washington State. Each year 35 million tons of freight and 10 million vehicles (including 2 million semi-trucks and numerous recreational vehicles) travel over Snoqualmie Pass. The average traffic volumes on this interstate are increasing by 3.5% each year, and daily usage has climbed as high as 58,000 vehicles during peak travel periods. These peak volumes already exceed the amount of traffic I-90 was designed to carry.

Deteriorating Pavement

The highway pavement on I-90 is between 30 and 50 years old. It has exceeded its lifespan and is in a state of rapid deterioration. Between 1993 and 1996, 120,000 dowel bars were installed to reinforce the cement concrete pavement, which will extend the pavement life to approximately the year 2010. Some sections with extensive cracking were also overlaid with asphalt pavement in 1998. Due to extreme weather conditions and heavy usage, the asphalt pavement rapidly deteriorated and was replaced three years later at a cost of $1.5 million. As more cement and asphalt concrete pavement fails throughout the corridor, repeated overlay projects will be required. Increased frequency and lengths of overlay projects adds to traffic delays and taxpayer costs.

Safety

There are numerous sharp curves which limit sight distance throughout the corridor. Debris on the highway, or accidents, can create hazards that may not be seen in time for motorists to avoid. The Hyak to Easton section of I-90 has an accident rate double that of other rural sections. Winter storm events amplify the hazards caused by the sight distance and alignment problems through this section.

Unstable Slopes

WSDOT has identified several unstable slopes within the project that deposit debris onto Interstate 90. In the past, debris from these unstable slopes, ranging in size from small rocks to complete slope failures, has closed traffic lanes and caused serious accidents. Although slope failures are not a regular occurrence, their potential threat to public safety is significant and warrants solutions.

Ecological Connectivity

Snoqualmie Pass is within an area recognized as a critical connective link in the north/south movement of wildlife in the Cascade Range. Habitat diversity within the project area is high due to extreme differences in precipitation and elevation. Three distinct linkage zones have been identified within the project limits based on differences in biological communities. These communities include threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, in both terrestrial and aquatic habitats. The existing highway acts as a barrier bisecting these zones. An adequate connection between habitats on either side of I-90 is necessary for the continued health of these ecosystems, and the safety of both drivers and wildlife.

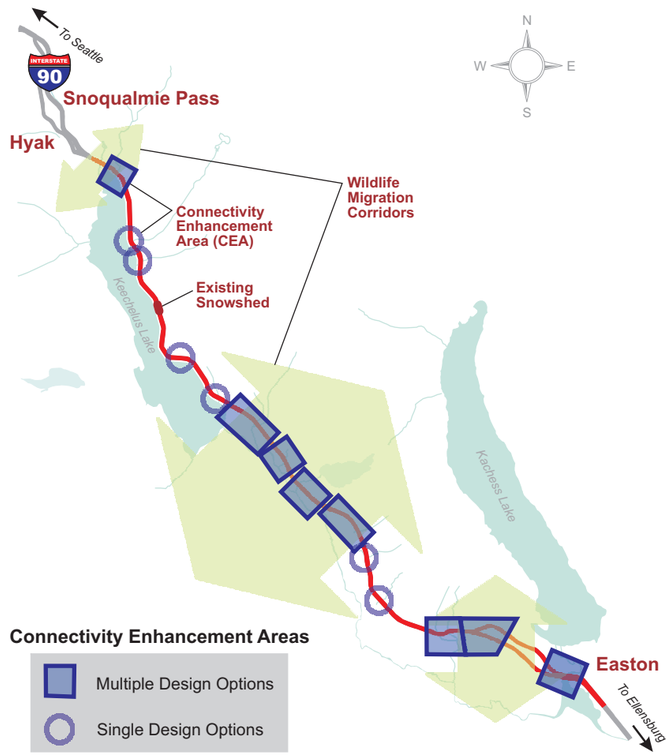
Ecological Connectivity Options

What are Connectivity Enhancement Areas?

Several streams and documented wildlife crossing locations have been identified as Connectivity Enhancement Areas (CEA's). At these locations, the highway divides significant habitats. The connection between those habitats needs to be improved.

For six of these CEA's there is only a single design option. At the remaining locations, there are multiple design options that provide varying degrees of connectivity. WSDOT is evaluating these locations to select a preferred alternative. There are over 3000 possible combinations of connectivity improvements. Each CEA will be evaluated individually and then collectively to determine the preferred alternative.

The photos to the right depict connectivity enhancement options. Compared to the existing conditions, any of the improvement options would significantly enhance ecological connectivity and safety for drivers and wildlife in the area.



What are the options?

- Large structures sized to span multiple wildlife pathways and wetlands would provide wide-open crossings with minimum obstructions and allow safe movement of wildlife between habitats.
- Floodplains and channel migration zones would be enhanced to provide more natural conditions.

- Groups of moderately sized openings or wider structures spanning multiple pathways would provide greater opportunities for wildlife movement between habitats.
- Floodplains and channel migration zones would be greatly improved over existing conditions.

- Structures would be sized for hydraulic capacity, fish passage, and to improve opportunities for wildlife movement between habitats.
- Floodplains and channel migration zones would be improved over existing conditions.